

Top sports stories, 1C
Police review speeds along 8 Mile, 3A



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farmington FOCUS

'Slush funds' County, Hills, city find snow business expensive

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MORE flicks.
A large video rental store, Entertainment Time Video, will occupy most of the space in a new building next to the A & P in the Downtown Farmington Center. The new facility will take up 8,000 of the 10,000-square-foot building, said landlord/developer Larry Lenchner. A 120-slot parking lot will be developed behind the A & P on Orchard Street. A walkway will separate the new building and the supermarket.

GOOD turnout.
The Dec. 17 Informational meeting for Farmington Hills' Year 2000 Plan drew about 60 residents, said Mayor-elect Terry Sever. Forty already have asked to serve on one of the six task forces. Nearly 100 are expected to become involved in the year-long study project to determine city needs and desires over the next decade. The city council will make task force appointments Jan. 4. The city of Farmington will also take part in the project.

QUOTE of the week

Get off your seat and move your feet. I've always had that as a philosophy.

— Longacre Elementary principal Bill Smith, about his new job

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Early Holiday Deadlines

To place your classified "liner" ad in our Monday, Jan. 2 issue (distributed Tues., Jan. 3), please call before 5:00 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 29.

Oakland County 644-1070

Wayne County 591-0900

Rochester 852-3222

Happy Holidays



Farmington Hills public works employees Marvin Ripaldi (left) and Darren Collins crewed truck No. 211 Tuesday, clearing sewers to let slush run off from this winter's first major snowfall.

By C. L. Rugenstein
staff writer

Snow removal. It's a necessity you don't miss unless it isn't there, noted Thomas Biasell. The director of public services for Farmington Hills spoke about snow and ice removal policies for roads as a post-Christmas storm drizzled from snow to slush outside his office window Tuesday.

"It's like eating, I guess," Biasell said. "It's necessary, you spend money on it, but you can't point to something and say 'That's where I spent my money,' especially in summer. But immediately after a storm! That's when the men, machines and materials involved in snow removal earn the approximate \$203,000 budgeted for the job in Farmington Hills."

About \$55,000 of that is for material, part of which is the salt itself, which Farmington Hills keeps stockpiled under salt domes. The city uses about 3,000 tons of salt per year, Biasell said, but the amount varies according to the severity of the weather. And Farmington Hills has a "bare pavement" policy.

ROADS FOR which Farmington Hills is responsible are "plowed and salted right down to the bare pavement," Biasell explained.

It's done with a fleet of at least 12 vehicles, five- and 10-cubic yard dump trucks with "spreaders, augers, and underbody-blades," Biasell said. Salt is also stored in the trucks, in different capacities, Biasell noted. That's partly to be ready to go when needed, and also to keep the salt from crustling over.

"There are two different types of storms," Biasell explained, which call for two different plans of action.

When the snow starts flying at night, like the after-Christmas storm, the police department will alert the foreman of the snow removal crews. The foreman will come in and evaluate things, and call the crews in.

That could mean as few as five of the 25 people in the department of public works, or as many as 50.

"It depends on the severity of the storm," Biasell said. For the recent storm, he said "I think we used five. But basically, we use every DPW employee," including some drafters from other departments like Parks and Recreation, and Engineering driving 4-by-4s (such as Broncos) with snow plows attached, for severe snow.

FOR BIG storms, more than four inches of snow and continuous snowfall, the foreman acts on his own initiative to come in and call in the crews.

Top priority is to have the major roads of the 240 miles of roads Farmington Hills is responsible for cleared by morning for the rush hour traffic. There are four major routes, five including the school bus routes when school is in session, Biasell said. Drake, Halstead, and all the mile roads through the city are major routes, Biasell said.

For border roads like Inkster, Farmington Hills shares the responsibility. Southfield clears the road south of Northwestern Highway, and Farmington Hills clears the road

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School plans will blend styles

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Planned upgrades for Farmington High will give the district's oldest school a look fit for today's education, mixing the original 1953 architecture with a later building addition.

"At Farmington High School you have a split personality," explained Sandy Stevenson, vice president with the architectural firm of Greiner, Inc. "We did five or six studies of direction. This one jumped out as being very appropriate. It will fit in, but also make a difference."

Architects tried to answer the questions "what were some of the things in the 1970s addition we can build on?" and "how can we tie them (the two buildings) together?" when

Work to revamp Farmington High's exterior and expand the media center will cost the district an estimated \$2.7 million.

preparing the design, he said. Proposed plans will give the school an "academic feeling," Stevenson added. The Grand Rapids architectural firm has been retained to handle both the exterior renovation and expansion of the school's media center.

PLANS CALL for using lots of brick, putting a backlit gateway at

the building's entrance, and using brick pavers and more trees at the front of the building. The parking area and walkway into the main entrance will also be redesigned to be more effective, and stairs will be eliminated to accommodate handicapped people.

School board trustee Jack Inch, a graduate of Farmington High, said he was concerned with the look of the school lobby once a visitor enters the building. "I have always felt . . . there is no focus at all," he said. "Students have made very good use of that area. It's to the visitors that it looks bland."

Stevenson assured the board that the new media center, also in the works, would be the center of focus to those walking into the main entrance.

Work to revamp the building exterior and expand the media center will cost the district an estimated \$2.7 million, to be taken from the district's Capital Fund. Most of the money in the Capital Fund comes from the 1985 sale of property at 12 Mile and Drake Road to Little Caesars Enterprises. After the Farmington High project, there will be about \$1 million left in the fund.

The new state-of-the-art media center will double the size of the current school library. It will make Farmington High the telecommunications hub between schools, and eventually linking the district electronically with the community.

Both the media center and building facade improvements are expected to be completed in 1989.

25 tires slashed; reward offered

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The city of Farmington Hills is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for slashing 25 tires on eight city-owned vehicles before dawn Dec. 23.

"This is something that we want to do — whatever we can do to find the perpetrator," city manager William Costick said. "It will give the police an additional tool to do their job."

The eight vehicles, used by city employees for city business, were parked in the southeast parking

Heritage Park top project in bid for state park money

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Heritage Park will be the primary focus of Farmington Hills' attempts to secure new state money for parks and recreation improvements, available thanks to voter approval of Proposal D in November.

"Proposal D puts more money into the pipeline and gives us greater opportunity to compete for the dollars," Farmington Hills special services director Dan Potter said. "We have benefited from grant programs in the past. But competition for dollars has increased dramatically."

Passage of Proposal D authorized the state to issue \$140 million in general obligation bonds to continue improving state and local parks and recreation projects. Farmington Hills voters overwhelmingly supported the proposal.

Of the total \$140 million, \$70 million is set aside for local programs. Of the local share, \$65 million will provide grants and loans to local

'Proposal D puts more money into the pipeline and gives us greater opportunity to compete for the dollars.'

— Dan Potter
special services director

communities and another \$5 million will provide grants or loans to local governments to redevelop and reuse vacant or abandoned manufacturing sites.

"We're in the process of looking at projects that we know need to be addressed," Potter said.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT of the 211-acre Heritage Park on Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile, will probably be the priority park for grant applications. "We will also look at other needs but the em-

phasis will be Heritage Park," Potter said.

"Certainly, once we have our thoughts together, we'll go to the Parks and Recreation Commission. We also will be looking for suggestions from the community," Potter continued.

Development of a south-end park in or near Old Towne also is a likely candidate for grant money. Another grant already has been approved to help purchase the property. "We're in the process of having an appraisal (of the property) done. It will need (state) Department of Natural Resources approval," Potter said.

Concession stands and restrooms at Pioneer Park still are needed though it's still unknown whether the improvements will be grant eligible.

City officials are continuing to look at needs at Waldron Park on Independence in Old Towne. "That certainly would be grant eligible," Potter said.

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Bond PAC formed

By Casey Hane
staff writer

A political action committee comprised mostly of Farmington-area parents has formed to promote and distribute information about the upcoming Jan. 31 special school bond election.

The group, called Friends of Farmington Schools, will raise money and promote the election through a series of public meetings and possible advertisements, in an effort to get the \$7.3 million measure passed. The money would be used to build a new elementary school at 11 Mile east of Halsted on the district's west side.

The overcrowding issue at the elementary school level prompted parents from all levels to organize this effort. "The whole district reflects in every single place," explained one organizer, Tina Jensen, who has one child at Farmington High School. "You have to think of the whole picture, because you're a member of the community. I don't want to see portables (classrooms). It's a stress on everyone concerned."

There are currently three Farmington elementary schools using portables: Larkshire has one, Flanders has two and Longacre has five.

DIRECTOR OF the district's School/Community Relations Department, Pamela O'Malley, is coordinating the district's effort, although legally cannot be affiliated with the parent's PAC group. She said she felt comfortable with this bond issue, compared with a \$27.4 million effort that failed last September. The initial effort asked for money for a new elementary school, but the bulk of it

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